

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 8 to 13 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein.

1. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method for heating a film of zinc oxide electrochemically deposited on an electroconductive substrate from an aqueous solution,

wherein heat treatment is carried out at a treatment temperature of 150°C or higher and 400°C or lower in a N₂ or inert gas atmosphere that contains oxygen.

2. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method according to claim 1, wherein an oxygen partial pressure ratio to N₂ or inert gas is 1% or higher and lower than 10%.

3. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method according to claim 1, wherein a treatment pressure is set to 5 kPa or higher and lower than 50 kPa.

4. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method according to claim 1, wherein the inert gas is one of helium, argon, and a mixture gas of helium and argon.

5. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method according to claim 1, wherein the electroconductive substrate is a substrate in continuous form and is subjected to heat treatment while wound into a roll.

6. (Original) A zinc oxide film treatment method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the treatment subject is raised to a treatment temperature at a rate of 2.0°C/min or less.

7. (Original) A method of manufacturing a photovoltaic device, comprising a step of forming, on a zinc oxide film heated by a zinc oxide film treatment method of claim 1, semiconductor layers at a temperature lower than the treatment temperature.

8. to 13. (Cancelled)